

March 6, 2014

Attention Senate Committee Members:

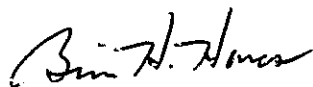
I write to you in strong opposition to Senate Bill 619. The School District of Ashwaubenon has been positively impacted by the standards from the standpoint that we have increased the amount of expectations on the plate of teachers and administrators. It takes time to unpack, understand and coordinate curriculum delivery and numerous hours and district resources have been dedicated to this process. Senate Bill 619 would set district standard-based instruction efforts back by three to five years. Curriculum review is an ongoing process and at the heart of what we do to impact learning. From that standpoint, we have always looked at curriculum with a continuous improvement focus. The difference with the Common Core is that it impacts multiple curricular areas.

Our trained and certified educators have found that the Common Core standards are more rigorous than what the state has expected in the past. The Common Core Standards provide a higher level of rigor, relevance and overall expectations for students.

We have augmented the standards and view them as a “floor” not “ceiling” expectation. We view the Common Core as the “What” to teach but understand we have the autonomy to determine “How” to deliver and enhance the general framework outlined in Common Core. Examples of areas that are augmented in Ashwaubenon include district handwriting expectations, college bound math track availability, world language opportunities beginning at the elementary level, gifted and talented extensions with our GLOBE program at the elementary and middle levels, and other advanced placement and honors level opportunities.

Having served in public education for the past 27 years and in the role as a public school Superintendent the past eighteen years, what upsets me the most is the fact that the development of our state standards has become politicized! We have highly trained educators who recognize the value and need to increase rigor; it is extremely concerning to me to observe individuals without such training attempting to make curricular decisions. Wisconsin has an outstanding reputation for quality education and that quality is seriously being threatened by recent decisions. Checking with local universities, teacher education enrollment is down. If this trend continues it will seriously jeopardize the quality of education as well as future economy in Wisconsin. Again, I urge you to oppose Senate Bill 619. Please feel free to call me if you would like to discuss this further or to talk directly with other educators.

Respectfully,



Brian H. Hanes, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools